



Housing Plan Implementation Committee

Date: May 6, 2021

Time: 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Location: Virtual meeting via Zoom

Minutes

Present: Ben Bradlow, Pam Hallett, Michelle Shortsleeve, Jonathan Nyberg, Karen Kelleher, Patricia Worden

Consultants: Judi Barrett, Alexs Lanzillotta, Nate Kelly

Staff: Jennifer Raitt, Kelly Lynema

Guests: Lenard Diggins, Calpurnya Roberts, Erin Moriarty

1. Housing Production Plan
 - a. Presentation & Discussion

Representatives from Barrett Consulting Group and Horsley Witten presented an update on the process to date on the Housing Production Plan (HPP). Judi Barrett noted that they will be meeting with the HPIC three times over the course of the plan, with some communication between meetings. The consultant team is seeking the HPIC's feedback on select draft documents, help determining the outreach methods that will be most effective for the project, and assistance in determining which members are able to commit to specific outreach roles.

Alexis Lanzillotta (Barrett Planning Group) shared that Arlington's current HPP expires in November, so they are on a fast trajectory to complete the update by then. In May and June, the consultants will research demographics, conduct data analysis, and kick off the community engagement process. The HPIC website has already been updated, and the consultants are planning focus groups toward the end of May. The first major public forum will be held in June.

The first deliverable is scheduled for July, with the draft needs assessment. Alexis explained that this is a document that looks at housing needs and barriers. The second deliverable will be the draft goals, which will be based on analysis and community feedback. There are two additional community meetings anticipated in the project schedule: one in September after the consultants receive HPIC feedback on the draft goals, and a second final public meeting after completion of the draft HPP. The

goal for the project is to have the plan completed by the end of October for submission to DHCD.

Patricia noted potential conflicts between Annual Town Meeting and the June 9 forum. Jenny Raitt responded that while we do not anticipate a conflict, we also need to hold a community meeting before school releases for the summer.

b. Community Engagement Plan

Turning to the plan for engagement, Alexis noted that the consultants are seeking feedback from the HPIC in addition to the plan for focus groups and community forums. She asked members of the HPIC how best to promote the plan, and presented a number of ideas, including posters with QR codes posted in frequently visited spaces, adding information about the HPP to email signatures, social media posts from the Town (with messages shared and amplified by HPIC members), and personal announcements at upcoming events. She then shared the updated HPIC website, highlighting the Community Questionnaire. The purpose of the questionnaire is to gain initial feedback about Arlington's housing needs and personal stories. The form will close at the end of May so the consultants have time to process feedback and share at the June community forum.

Kelly Lynema shared the plan for press releases, website updates, and the ability to post videos of forums to the HPIC website so they can be viewed by individuals who are unable to attend.

Benjamin Bradlow asked about messaging for the plan, adding that it would be helpful to emphasize what has happened in Arlington in housing policy over the last six months, especially Affordable Housing Trust and Real Estate Transfer Fee. He noted that it would be beneficial for residents to understand that the Town, through Town Meeting, has made the production of affordable housing a priority. He expressed a desire to communicate that we are not just updating a plan from a few years ago, but also been some momentum in how the Town has expressed itself and set the stage for what the HPP update can do. Alexis commented that this will be a component of the elevator speech they are creating, and will update the speech and the press release to reflect Ben's comments.

Karen Kelleher indicated that the Trust Fund and Trustees are to be appointed. Their first task is going to be to create an action plan. She asked how the HPP process will inform the action planning process. Jenny said that the Town envisions the two processes will overlap. The bylaw passed at the Special Town Meeting, was advertised after the Attorney General approved the bylaw, a legal notice had to be published, and now the committee openings can be shared, which will happen in the next

week. Jenny said she will talk to the Moderator about making an announcement at Town Meeting. The role of the trustees is fiduciary, while the role of the HPIC is policy oriented.

Michelle Shortsleeve echoed Ben's statements, recommending that the elevator pitch remove some of the technical language down in favor of more colloquial terms that express what the HPP is ultimately oriented to do.

Patricia asked whether initial outreach was going to bring in people who are the most concerned about developing affordable housing, and recommended that the press release indicate that the HPP is concerned with preservation as well.

Calpurnia Roberts added that for outreach, advertising at bus stops, frequently traveled areas, and the Arlington Boys & Girls Club would be helpful.

Alexis added that the consultants are looking for input on groups that are missing from the engagement spreadsheet.

c. Upcoming Focus Groups and Community Forum

Alexis shared that invitations to the focus groups will be shared by Jenny in the next week. The focus groups will be by invite only and small by design (only five individuals or fewer per session). Focus Group invites being sent by Jenny. The consultants are looking to hear more from various stakeholders in advance of the first community meeting.

The focus groups and promotion around the upcoming forum will be shared with targeted community groups, organizations, and town departments. Alexis asked the HPIC for additional ideas on who should we be speaking to and who should get invited.

i. Messaging

Karen shared that we need to emphasize that the town is having a robust conversation about housing, production, and equity. It is important to anticipate this with the "why". Weaving that conversation about equity into this process will be important too. We also want to integrate communication about this plan with the July 13 Community Conversation and Fair Housing Action Plan completion.

Judi asked about the title of the plan, noting that another community she had worked with made a conscious decision about divorcing their HPP from 40B. For branding, they dropped "Housing

Production Plan" and said it was an "Affordable Housing Plan," and asked how the HPIC felt about that idea.

Jenny supported the change, but wanted to make sure the ultimate plan would still meet DHCD requirements. Michelle said she was glad Judi raised the question, since the plan hasn't been discussed in a non- bureaucratic way. She wants to make sure the role of people in the plan is emphasized so that people will be excited about participating.

Len Diggins added that affordable housing is a subset of housing, and asked if the focus of the plan is exclusively on affordability, or if it is focused on housing with affordability included as an important component. He added that the region needs more housing – all kinds of housing, including affordable housing.

Judi responded that while the plan is primarily about affordability, most HPPs are not limited to that. From a regulatory perspective the principal point is affordability.

Jonathan Nyberg commented that until you can get a Town like Arlington open to zoning changes, nothing is going to happen. The biggest issue is whether we can change zoning as a town, which will allow more housing, which will in turn allow more affordable housing.

Pam Hallett supports what Len and Jonathan said, adding that there is a lot of discussion about what does single family zoning actually mean, what is density all about, who wants 40Bs, who doesn't, etc. Affordability is very important, but again most people are playing around that concept because they know it's the right thing to do but they don't want to fund it and they don't want it next door. All of this needs to be part of the plan or people will break down along lines and you won't get consensus.

Ben said that he reads the message coming from the town as the Town supports the trust fund and transfer fee. In both cases everyone heard the arguments we would expect to hear from those who would try to stop affordability in a spurious way, and those arguments were rejected by Town Meeting. In Arlington, affordability is a stated goal, and the Town has decided to generate the institutions and funding streams to make it a reality. He noted that the point of this plan is to build on that foundation. He recommended removing the 40B comments from the elevator pitch, as the plan isn't about "protecting" the town or giving us control to stop big bad things.

Jenny added that the GLAM gets referenced a lot and wading into 40B discussions that centers the conversation around that as well. Patricia agrees that 40B is a distraction in these processes. She argued that the last Master Plan said that the only housing Arlington needs is affordable housing and senior housing. Jenny responded that this plan is not just about affordable housing and senior housing.

Patricia observed that it is important for the consultants to know that increasing density in Arlington is not favored by many Arlingtonians. Town Meeting voted No Action on proposed increased density zoning bylaw changes at the Annual Town Meeting of 2019.

Jonathan added that when you don't have zoning changes, 40B is the only option, while if you have more creative or expansive zoning options, 40B is not the go-to. We live in a dense environment and have a population that needs housing. Density is a reality, and the only question is where you put the density. We've made 40B a dirty word because we are not willing to make other changes.

Calpurnya commented that affordable housing is very important, but the reality is that there is a need for other types of housing. She noted that she and her friends are concerned about the other types of housing that are available. The plan needs a diversity of voices – a lot of people she knows aren't thinking about participating in the HPP because they think it's only about the extreme (affordable housing).

Alexis concluded that she was happy with the feedback the HPIC shared on the messaging. The consultants will finalize the June date, update the engagement plan and the messaging, and add in community contacts to the engagement spreadsheet. They will share revised materials to the committee.

2. Wrap-up

Jenny confirmed that we will keep June 9 as the community meeting date, but if Town Meeting does not appear to be moving along we can regroup and adjust the date.

Meetings: July 1, August 5, September 2, October 7, November 4, December 2